

Self-Reflection

IP Creativity Early Years, Namur

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Personal Experiences

When I arrived here I was very excited and curious about how these two weeks will turn out to be. At first I had to get used to my new surroundings and all the different languages and new faces. But I got used to everything really quickly and I had a lot of fun with everyone else. No matter if we were outside doing activities or inside just talking about the day or other things we always found something fun and exciting to do.

To work in a group with so many different languages was very difficult for me at first but we always made it work somehow and we understood each other even sometimes with poor English or no English at all. The “language-problem” got better with each day. And since you can always find something good in something bad, I could improve my French again, and I’m happy for that.

For me personally these two weeks were a great experience in many ways. I found out about my own limits, for example working with not a lot of sleep (caused of sleeping with 20 other people in one room and not everyone goes to sleep or gets up at the same time) or just trying new things that I’ve never done before which were challenging me.

Another great experience for me was to see how much more creative and productive I am in a multicultural group because each point of view and many, many different ideas are considered and discussed. I think working in a group and not alone with only one point of view is a better way for me to bring best results.

At the beginning working with the children who could only speak French was another challenge for me. But when I noticed that they didn’t care about “our” language barrier and that they knew what I meant or just showed me something instead of saying it, this “language problem” was solved, too. And I felt better because I think the barrier was mostly from my side because I was scared that I couldn’t help them enough or I couldn’t do what they wanted me to. After I recognized that there were no problems or barriers at all from their side I just enjoyed my time with the children and the other people of my group.

Intercultural Experiences

I think it was very interesting to get so much information about all the other countries! Not only the educational information about preschools and kindergartens, but also about their cultures, for example, their values, food, language, dances, music, etc.

I've visited a lot of different countries before, but I always get to know new things about them because even though sometimes there are some similarities between Germany and the other country, there are always so many differences and I always learn new facts and get new information.

I think this intercultural exchange about similarities and differences about the various systems, cultures and values is a very important factor for everybody and especially for us – the early childhood educators.

Professional Experiences

For me, it is great to have so many new, different and creative ideas about how and what to teach children. I've learned a lot about new methods and ways to make activities-especially with art, music and nature- more interesting for children.

The toolbox we made and my own personal booklet will be a good reminder of ideas and activities, so that I won't forget any of the many, many things we were taught or created ourselves. I think the toolbox is a great way to create and share ideas for games or other activities with children and it should be used more often, e.g. at Universities in Germany.

In my opinion kindergartens in Germany could improve with ideas and processes from other countries and that a mix of all the positive things about each system for the kindergartens and preschools in other countries would be the best way for Germany and anyone else, too.

I wish for my own professional future that I will remember everything I've learned and experienced here and that I can make use of it- while and after my studies- to improve my own ways of thinking and working with children.

Summarizing all in all these two weeks were a lot of fun, with a lot of challenges and a lot of new information.

I loved meeting so many new, fun, caring, understanding and exciting individuals here! I loved working and having with you! You were awesome!!

I'm thankful that I was able to make this experience and I hope I'll have many more chances like this!

